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PP RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHLN RUEHPB
DE RUEHHI #0685/01 0830857

ZNR UUUUU ZZH

P 240857Z MAR 06

FM AMEMBASSY HANOI

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1229

INFO RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY PRIORITY 0779

RUEHZS/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 2901

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 5474

RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY 0856

RUEHGZ/AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU PRIORITY 0648

RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU PRIORITY 0214

RUEHRO/USMISSION UN ROME PRIORITY

RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI PRIORITY 1343

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA PRIORITY

RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEHRC/USDA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//USDP/ISA/AP// PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHINGTON DC//J2/J3/J5//

RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC//DHO-3//

RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI//J00/J2/J3/J5//

RHEFAFM/DIRAFMIC FT DETRICK MD//MA-1A//

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HANOI 000685

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR G, CA/OCS/ACS/EAP, EAP/EX, EAP/MLS, EAP/EP, INR,
OES/STC (PBATES), OES/IHA (DSINGER AND NCOMELLA), AND MED
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR ANE AND GH (DCARROLL, SCLEMENTS AND
PCHAPLIN)

STATE PASS TO USTR (ELENA BRYAN)

STATE PASS TO HHS/OGHA (WSTIEGER, EELVANDER AND ABHAT)

USDA PASS TO APHIS

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOR OSD/ISA/AP (LSTERN)

BANGKOK FOR RMO, CDC, USAID (MFRIEDMAN AND JMACARTHUR)

ROME FOR FAO

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: TBIO KFLU AMED AMGT CASC EAGR PINR SOCI VM

SUBJECT: VIETNAM - MARCH 23 AVIAN INFLUENZA REPORT

REF: HANOI 630 AND PREVIOUS

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¶11. (U) Summary. There have been no new human Avian Influenza (AI) deaths since late October 2005 and no human cases since November 9, 2005. The Government of Vietnam (GVN) continues to report no AI outbreaks in poultry since the last reported incident on December 17, 2005. The GVN has ordered tighter border controls and more severe punishment for smugglers to stop illegal importation of AI-infected poultry and eggs from China. Vice Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) Nui Ba Bong also told a visiting USG official that he believed the speed and accuracy of GVN reporting on AI-related developments throughout Vietnam to be "very good." End Summary.

¶12. (U) As of March 23, 2006:

-- No human AI deaths since October 29, 2005

-- No new human AI cases since November 9, 2005

-- No AI outbreaks in poultry since the last reported incident on Dec. 17, 2005 in Cao Bang Province

¶13. (U) As previously reported (refftel), a large amount of poultry smuggled from China is finding its way into Vietnam. In response, the GVN has ordered tighter border controls and

more severe punishment for smugglers to stop illegal importation of AI-infected poultry and eggs from China.

According to a local newspaper report, poultry and egg smugglers attacked Vietnamese border guards over the weekend, injuring five soldiers. As an indication of the seriousness with which the GVN views such territorial breaches, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) Cao Duc Phat visited provinces along the Chinese border this week.

¶4. (U) Econoffs visited a border checkpoint in Lang Son province, where customs officials claimed that measures implemented to prevent the importation of poultry from China were effective and resulted in an 80-90 percent decrease in the number of smuggled birds. However, given that customs officials inspect less than 15 percent of all shipments, this assertion may be overly optimistic, especially since officials acknowledged that smugglers have continued to use unofficial crossings along Lang Son's 253 kilometer-long border with China. These officials also stated that whenever they discovered such birds they were promptly destroyed, and that the province had not experienced a single case of AI among its bird population.

¶5. (SBU) On March 20, Mr. Terrence Markin, a Deputy Director at the National Intelligence Center, Agriculture Attaché and ESTHoff met with Vice Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Nui Ba Bong to discuss the current AI situation in Vietnam. The Vice Minister said that while previous outbreaks in Vietnam had been "severe," there have been no poultry outbreaks in the last three months and no human infections in five months. The second nationwide poultry vaccination campaign is targeting 130 million poultry, with two phases beginning in February and August 2006, he added. The Vice Minister also noted that there has

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been good cooperation between the GVN and international donor community. Responding to a specific question about AI outbreaks in Burma, the Vice Minister said the GVN had not received any requests from the Government of Burma, but that if requested, he felt MARD could share lessons in public information dissemination and other technical issues. Answering our query regarding the capacity of the GVN to report AI outbreaks in remote areas along the Chinese border, the Vice Minister commented that reporting is "very good," and that within one or two days the central government is informed of any potential AI outbreak in poultry. He clarified that statement by saying "as soon as chickens die, farmers report the incident to local authorities."

¶6. (U) David Krueger, a University of Wisconsin laboratory expert sponsored by USDA, is working for one month with laboratories in southern Vietnam to establish an effective, real-time PCR diagnostic system. After four days of consultations with officials from MARD's Department of Animal Health (DAH) and their Japanese technical advisor, Mr. Krueger visited HCMC and will be working in Vietnam through April 21. The ability to use this advanced technology is crucial for building capacity in surveillance for AI and other infectious diseases. Mr. Krueger will hold several workshops and work with DAH to set up protocols in labs in HCMC, Can Tho and Danang.

¶7. (U) The World Bank recently circulated a proposed terms of reference for a joint assessment mission for Vietnam's AI Integrated National Operational Work Program to the donor community. The program will address the need to transition from emergency response to medium and long-term integrated sector development for disease control programs in both poultry and human populations. There is also an urgent need to facilitate the rehabilitation of the poultry sector at all levels of commercial production of meat and eggs and to ensure food security for small-scale rural poor. USAID will participate in the joint assessment. Earlier this week,

USAID Regional Development Mission staff met with the Embassy Health Attaché, Agriculture Attaché and ESTHoff to discuss programming USD five million in USAID support to AI activities in Vietnam.

MARINE